The Quran as a Mathematical Miracle

Recently a number of studies have been done on the Quran involving counting its words, letters, verses, and chapters. A number of instances of surprising correspondence have been found. For example:

WORD PATTERNS

- The word for man (ar-Rajul) and the word for woman (Imra-ah) occur 24 times each.
- The word for satan (shaytaan) and the word for angel (malaa-ikah) occur 68 times each.
- The word for this life (dunya) and the word for the next life (aakhirah) occur 115 times each.
- The word for month (shahr) occurs 12 times.
- The word for two months (shahrayn) occurs 30 times.
- The word for day (yaum) occurs 365 times.
- The word for dry land (barr, etc.) occurs 13 times when contrasted with the word for sea (bahr) which occurs 32 times. Now 13 to 32 happens to be the approximate ratio of land to water on the surface of the globe.

What explains these instances of correspondence? There are three viable considerations: either it is by chance, by human design, or by divine design. But these are too much to credit to mere chance. Nor did it come about by human design. No one knew about this until recent studies uncovered it.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE QURAN

Anyone familiar with the history of the Quran will know that the Quran is a collection of inspired messages which the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, recited, a piece at a time, over a period of twenty-three years, often in response to new and unexpected events. It is obvious that the number of times he used certain words in all of his recited pieces could not conceivably be kept in his memory. It is difficult enough to count the words from the printed page to make sure that your count is correct, much less to suggest that someone already did this using his memory. To remember, for example, how many times he mentioned the word 'day' over a period of 23 years would be an insurmountable task.

We are therefore left with the third of the three options: that it is by divine design. Hence we now have further evidence that the Quran is the word of Allah. And below are yet some more instances of this phenomenon.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHAPTER AND VERSE NUMBERS IN THE QURAN

The numbering of chapters and verses in the Quran gradually evolved during the first few centuries of Islam in order to facilitate correct reading and easy referencing. Hence we can be sure that the number of chapters in the Quran and the number of verses within each chapter was not invented by man but only discovered by man. The early memorized text was not accompanied by verse numberings. Many Muslims who have memorized large portions of the Quran would be hard pressed to say how many verses a particular memorized chapter contains. But as the text was written and copied over, scribes introduced niceties to make the text more user-friendly. At first, the text was written without any identifiers to mark the end of verses. And this led to different suggestions as to where one verse ends and another begins. Eventually it was thought wise to leave a space at the end of a verse to aid the uninitiated reader. Later copyists put a circle in each space thus adding a decorative feature to increase the visual clarity of the written page. Later copyists began to number the circles, at first numbering every fifth circle. In the final stage every circle was numbered, and today we can easily see a number marking each verse of the Quran.

Hence, the number of verses was implicit at first in the text as it was recited from memory. Later, the number of verses was gradually made explicit by a natural process of copying and discovering. It is clear, then, that no human decided that a certain chapter should have a certain number of verses. Yet there occurs many instances of surprising correspondence between numbers of chapters, verses, words, and letters in the Quran.

Here are some examples:

EXAMPLES OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN CHAPTER NUMBERS AND NUMBER OF VERSES

Chapter 57: al-Hadeed (Iron)

The chapter named al-Hadeed (Iron) is the 57th chapter. It has 29 verses. There is a mathematical relationship between these two numbers, as follows:
57 x 29 = 1653
The sum of the whole numbers from 1 to 57 is the same, represented mathematically as:
1+2+3+. . .+ 57=1653
It appears that the number of verses could have been almost any number, and that 29 was chosen to result in this correspondence.

Chapter 22: al-Hajj (Pilgrimage)

The chapter al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage) has the Quran's last mention of 'pilgrimage' in verse number 27. This verse has 14 words. There is a mathematical relationship between these two numbers:
14 x 27 = 378
1+2+3+. . .+ 27=378
Again, it appears, that the number of words in this verse was chosen to bring about this correspondence.

Chapter 71: Noah

The chapter Nuh (Noah) is numbered 71. It has 28 verses. Now, there are 28 different chapters that mention Noah. And because some chapters mention Noah more than once there are a total of 43 times that Noah is mentioned. Now consider the relationship between these three numbers:
43+28=71
43+71=114 which is the total number of chapters in the Quran. Since 28 chapters mention Noah, how many chapters do not mention Noah? The answer is 114–28=86, which is 43 times 2. Now consider that the last mention of Noah is in the chapter of Noah. It turns out that of the 86 chapters that do not mention Noah, 43 chapters come before the chapter of Noah and 43 chapters come after it.
This can be shown mathematically, given the facts above. No chapter after chapter 71 mentions Noah. Therefore there are 114-71=43 chapters after chapter 71 which do not mention Noah. And, of the first 71 chapters in the Quran, there are 28 chapters which mention Noah. Therefore there are 71-28=43 chapters before the chapter of Noah which do not mention Noah. Hence the chapter Nuh (Noah) numbered 71 is strategically placed and its number of verses is apparently chosen to bring about these complex relationships between the numbers involved.

Chapter 13: al-Ra`ad (Thunder)

The chapter ar-Ra`d (Thunder) is numbered 13, and is so named because it mentions the word 'thunder'. That word occurs in verse number 13. This verse also, coincidentally, occurs in the 13th part of the Quran. Being comprised of 114 chapters of unequal length, the Quran is divided into 30 parts of roughly equal length such that a reading of a part each day will complete the book in a month. The 13th verse of the 13th chapter does not have to occur in the 13th part., but it does. Now, the same verse has 19 words. These words are written with 83 letters. There is one other place in the entire Quran that mentions 'thunder'. That is chapter 2, verse number 19. This verse also has 19 words written with 83 letters, although the words are mostly different. It appears that these instances of correspondence were planned, though not by any human being.

Chapter 32: as-Sajdah (Prostration)

Chapter 32 is called as-Sajdah (Prostration) because it mentions the key word 'sujjadan' (prostrate). As is typical of the Arabic language, this word is derived from the three-letter root SJD to which vowels and other increments are used to produce a variety of words clustered around the root meaning "to prostrate."

- Words based on this root are used in 32 different chapters of the Quran, hence corresponding to the number of this chapter which bears the related name.
- The verse in this chapter which mentions prostration is such that a believer naturally wants to prostrate to God after reading it. Now, in the entire Quran there are 15 such verses which have been traditionally noted as 'verses of prostration'.
- The number of verses in this chapter is 30. Half of that number is 15. It turns out that the number 15 is also the number of the verse of prostration in chapter 32.
- There are 372 words in this chapter. Half of that is 186. It turns out that the key word in this chapter is the 186th word in the chapter.

Chapter 27: an-Naml (Ants)

Chapter an-Naml (The Ant) is numbered 27 and has 93 verses. It begins with two mysterious letters which correspond roughly to the English letters T and S. These two initials do not spell a word. Commentators of the Quran generally say that although nothing in the Quran is without a reason, they do not know the reason for these and other such initials being placed at the start of some chapters. But consider these observations.

- In chapter 27 the letter T is written 27 times.
- In this same chapter, consisting of 93 verses, the letter S is written 93 times.

It seems that this correspondence was planned. But not by humans. It is difficult enough to try and count the letters in the written text. It would have been a gigantic task for anyone to have done this from memory. And even if someone had used secret notes, it is difficult to see why he or she did not tell anyone about this remarkable feature.

Connecting Chapter 9 with Chapter 27

One mentally connects chapter 9 and 27 for the following reason. Every chapter of the Quran except chapter 9 begins with the familiar phrase called the *'Basmala'*, usually rendered in English as "In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful." On the other hand, chapter 27 is the only chapter that mentions the phrase in the body of the chapter. Hence, one reading the chapters sequentially is initially surprised to find it absent from the beginning of chapter 9 and again present in the body of chapter 27. Now consider the numerical relationship between these two chapters.

- The difference between the chapter numbers is 27-9=18.
- The number of chapters from 9 to 27 inclusive is 19.

These two results, 18 and 19, form an interesting relationship with the chapter numbers of these two chapters. Consider:

- 18 x 19 = 342
- 9+10+11+ . . . +27 = 342

In chapter 27 we have the only verse in the Quran to mention the word 'ant.' The verse number is 18 and it contains 19 words, thus highlighting the interplay between 18 and 19.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHAPTER AND VERSE NUMBERS FOR THE QURAN AS A WHOLE

We now arrive at one of the most surprising demonstrations of mathematical relationships between chapter and verse numbers. Before we turn to the demonstration itself, let us think about the use of an error check bit in computer data transmission. Thomas H. Athey and Robert W. Zmud write in their book *Introduction to Computers and Information Systems* (Illinois: Scott, Forseman and Company, 1986, pp. 238-39):

> To send data in a telecommunications network, start and stop information, origin and destination information, and error check bits must be added to the encoded data to form a data packet. . . . The error check bit is used to make sure the data received were not garbled during transmission. . . . In asynchronous transmission, the commonly used error check method is a parity bit. A parity bit is an extra bit that makes the sum of bits representing a character either even or odd.

Now, is it possible that a system is built into the Quran to assure us that its chapter and verses were transmitted without error, and that the Quran is of divine origin? It will be demonstrated that this is so indeed. First the bare facts:

- There are 114 chapters numbered in sequence 1, 2, 3, etc.

CHAPTER NUMBERS											
1	11	21	31	41	51	61	71	81	91	101	111
2	12	22	32	42	52	62	72	82	92	102	112
3	13	23	33	43	53	63	73	83	93	103	113
4	14	24	34	44	54	64	74	84	94	104	114
5	15	25	35	45	55	65	75	85	95	105	
6	16	26	36	46	56	66	76	86	96	106	
7	17	27	37	47	57	67	77	87	97	107	
8	18	28	38	48	58	68	78	88	98	108	
9	19	29	39	49	59	69	79	89	99	109	
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	

Total of All Chapter Numbers	6555

- The numbers of verses in each chapter do not form a predictable pattern. The longer chapters generally come earlier, and the length of chapters gradually reduce, though not in a straight line. Hence we have the number of verses for the first ten chapters in sequence being 7, 286, 200, 176, 120, 165, 206, 75, 129, and 109. The numbers seem to go up and down with no predictable pattern.

VERSES IN EACH CHAPTER											
7	123	112	34	54	60	14	28	29	15	11	5
286	111	78	30	53	49	11	28	19	21	8	4
200	43	118	73	89	62	11	20	36	11	3	5
176	52	64	54	59	55	18	56	25	8	9	6
120	99	77	45	37	78	12	40	22	8	5	
165	128	227	53	35	96	12	31	17	19	4	
206	111	93	182	38	29	30	50	19	5	7	
75	110	88	88	29	22	52	40	26	8	3	
129	98	69	75	18	24	52	46	30	8	6	
109	135	60	85	45	13	44	42	20	11	3	

Total Number of Verses in the Quran	6236

- It is a simple observation that the chapter numbers alternate between being odd and being even. Hence 1 is odd, 2 is even, 3 is odd, etc.
- It is also obvious that the number of verses in each chapter do not alternate in this predictable way. Instead, for the first ten chapters of the Quran, for example, the number of verses are Odd, Even, Even, Even, Even, Odd, Even, Odd, Odd and Odd. If we add each chapter number to the number of verses in that chapter we get these 114 results:

Results obtained from adding
the number of each chapter to its number of verses

8	134	133	65	95	111	75	99	110	106	112	116
288	123	100	62	95	101	73	100	101	113	110	116
203	56	141	106	132	115	74	93	119	104	106	118
180	66	88	88	103	109	82	130	109	102	113	120
125	114	102	80	82	133	77	115	107	103	110	
171	144	253	119	81	152	78	107	103	115	110	
213	128	120	219	85	86	97	127	106	102	114	
83	128	116	126	77	80	120	118	114	106	111	
138	117	98	114	67	83	121	125	119	107	115	
119	155	90	125	95	73	114	122	110	111	113	

- Surprisingly, 57 of these results are even numbers and 57 are odd numbers.
- If we take the sum of all the even numbers, the result is 6236.

EVEN NUMBER RESULTS											
8	134							110	106	112	116
288		100	62				100			110	116
	56		106	132		74	93		104	106	118
180	66	88	88			82	130		102	113	120
	114	80	80	82						110	
	144				152	78				110	
	128				86			106	102	114	
	128	126	126		80	120	118	114	106		
138		114	114								
						114	122	110			

Total of Even Number Results	6236

- Surprisingly this sum is also the total number of verses in the entire Quran.
- If we take the sum of all the odd numbers, the result is 6555.

ODD NUMBER RESULTS											
		133	65	95	111	75	99				
	123			95	101	73		101	113		
203		141			115		93	119			
				103	109			109		113	
125					133	77	115	107	103		
171		253	119	81			107	103	115		
213			219	85		97	127				
83				77						111	
	117			67	83	121	125	119	107	115	
119	155		125	95	73				111	113	

Total of Even Number Results	6555

- Surprisingly, this sum is also the sum of all the chapter numbers, i.e. 1+2+3+ . . . +114=6555

Hence we see that the total verses in each chapter form a complex relationship with their chapter numbers on a grand scale. It is too much to suppose that this double correspondence is a mere coincidence. These two numbers are so large that the possibility of their chance coincidence is extremely rare. It is easy to see that what we have here is a complex arrangement containing an internal assurance of the system's faultless preservation. It is fair to conclude that we have demonstrated here a grand design pointing to the Quran's divine origin and faithful preservation.

In this age of science and computers, when many have turned away from belief in God, it is reassuring that we still have a message which reaffirms belief in God. But it is not enough to marvel at the mathematical miracle from the maker of mankind in the message of Muhammad (pbuh.) In the face of this remarkable demonstration that the Quran is the Word of God we ought to begin now a life-transforming relationship with our Maker.

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